

HOME ECONOMICS

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X. SELECTION OF FOODS

THROUGH some inadvertence, perhaps occasioned by the failure to state that the table headed "Composition of Some Common Foods" did not include the water and mineral matter that would have made the total per cent. of each material one hundred, "ounces" was substituted for "per cent." in the first table given on page 364 of the February magazine. The table is reprinted here, in the more complete form, that there may be no mistake.

PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION OF SOME COMMON FOODS.

	Water.	Proteid.	Fat.	Carbo-hydrate.	Ash.	Calories
Beef (loin)	60.6	18.5	20.2	...	1.	1190
Bread	35.	9.1	1.6	53.3	1.	1225
Potatoes, as purchased, refuse about twenty per cent.	62.6	1.8	.1	14.7	.8	310
Oatmeal	7.3	16.1	7.2	67.5	1.9	1860
Rice	12.3	8.	.3	79.	.4	1630
Milk	87.	3.3	4.	5.	.7	325
Sugar	100.	..	1860
Butter	11.	1.	85.	3.	3605

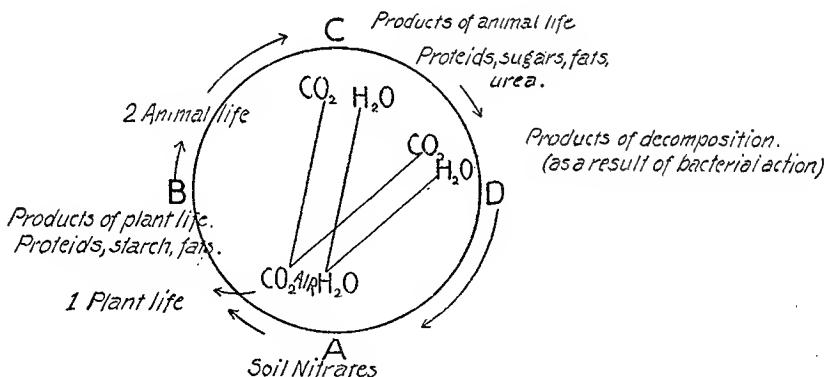
One of the questions that is coming to the front more and more often in discussions of food problems is that of the relative value of animal and vegetable foods. An increasing number of people are confining their diet largely, if not exclusively, to vegetable products and such animal substances, as milk and eggs, that do not imply the taking of life, while a smaller number exclude anything of animal origin. Is a mixed diet essential for health, or may we at will choose from the animal and vegetable kingdom?

Certain broad distinctions will immediately present themselves. As a rule animal foods are richer in nitrogenous matter, while vegetable foods are the chief source of carbohydrates. This becomes much more evident if we compare the two in a dry condition. Milk, for instance, makes a poor showing in proteid as compared with dried peas or even with rice; but if we take the total solids of the milk as a basis of comparison, eliminating its eighty-seven per cent. of water, the case is quite otherwise. This is the fairer method, for the dried peas and rice absorb

many times their weight of water in the process of cooking, so that the analysis of the raw material is quite different from that of the cooked food. Hutchison gives the following composition of a few typical dried foods:

100 parts of dried lean beef contain.....	89 parts of proteid
100 parts of dried fat beef contain.....	51 parts of proteid
100 parts of dried pea flour contain.....	27 parts of proteid
100 parts of dried wheat contain.....	16 parts of proteid
100 parts of dried rice contain.....	7 parts of proteid

Another difference between animal and vegetable food is found in their cost. Under most conditions animal food is much more expensive than vegetable. This is not difficult to understand when we remember that our animal food has been put through a further process of manufacture than the vegetable. If the grain raised, instead of going directly to man as food, is used to feed cattle, which in turn are slaughtered to furnish nourishment for human beings, the process necessarily adds to the cost of the food. This process, as well as the fact that plants are in general builders of material, while animals break down these complex compounds, is graphically shown by the accompanying diagram.



The same intermediate process which adds to the cost of food increases also its digestibility, so that we are not surprised to learn that vegetable proteid is less completely absorbed by the system than animal proteid. One reason for this lies in the fact that in the plant the proteid is enclosed within cellulose walls, and ordinary processes of cooking by no means free it.

In deciding from which kingdom we shall choose our diet we must consider almost wholly the proteid. The carbohydrates must necessarily be obtained chiefly from vegetable sources (sugar of milk being the

notable exception), and it seems to be a matter of indifference whether the fat of the diet is of animal or vegetable origin.

With the addition of milk, butter, cheese, and eggs it is not difficult, with care, to provide a satisfactory dietary without the use of meat. The case is different when vegetables form the only source of food supply. Because of the great excess of carbohydrates, and the presence of indigestible matter in the form of cellulose, a great bulk of food must be taken in order to get the necessary proteid. As a matter of fact, nearly all purely vegetarian diets are deficient in proteid. The extra cost of the animal proteid is justified by its availability, since it may be obtained without an excess of other substances, and since it is easily assimilated.

(To be continued.)

SOME OPPOSITE REMARKS ON CORSETS.—Dr. W. E. Frothingill says in the *Medical Press and Circular* that the modern woman wears heavy skirts, the weight of which is supported by bands around her waist—that soft portion of the body which is protected by no body-walls. How is it possible to wear around this portion of the body bands which support the weight of numerous and often heavy garments? The answer is, by means of the corset. The garment forms a bridge connecting the firm chest-wall with the firm pelvis. The use of the corset is to transmit the pressure of the skirt-bands to the hips and the ribs, and so to protect from their pressure the organs in the region of the waist. The conclusion is that, so long as skirt-bands are fastened round the waist, corsets should be worn. They should be stiffer than usually made if they are effectively to protect the soft, middle portion of the body from the pressure of the waistband. The front should be quite straight, and the waist measurement should be at least as large as the wearer's waist, measured over a single, soft garment. The abuse of the article consists in employing it as a means of compressing that which it was meant to protect from compressing, namely, the soft, middle portion of the body. Fashion in corsets has of late made a motion in the right direction in the straight, stiff front.

The *Medical Record* makes the statement that a Dr. Maréchal, of Paris, is urging the passage of a law making the wearing of a corset by any woman under thirty years of age a penal offence. Apropos of this rather radical legislation, it is stated that a woman in Buffalo recently died through the penetration of her heart by a corset steel, and we have also been informed of a very serious X-ray burn resulting from the wearing of a corset during treatment. In spite of these occurrences, we imagine the corset will still remain in use.